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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 16, 2007

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 16, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

EVRENSEL / RADIKAL: The widely participated conference on "Turkey Seeking Peace" held in Ankara outlined tangible draft program that could be pursued in efforts to attain peace. The recommendations in the program will be submitted to the Turkish Parliament and the government.

SECURITY

SABAH (GUNEY): It is reported that the increased activities observed at the Incirlik Air Base was because of the sixteen F-16 planes that arrived at the base for training purposes. An official from the U.S. Air Force said that the trainings were conducted under Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement signed between Turkey and the U.S. The official reportedly dismissed charges that the increased activities represented pressure put against Iran. The planes will reportedly return to the Spangdahlem Airbase in Germany at the end of the training.

ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET: Three terrorists were killed in rural sections of Diyarbakir's Lice district and Bingol's Genc district during the military operations against the PKK. Two terrorists who fled away from the PKK surrendered to authorities in Sirnak province.

ECONOMY

BOLGE / EKSPRES / CUMHURIYET / YENI SAFAK: Prolonged dry spell and the Cukurova region receiving no rain for 68 days may affect the 2,300,000 cedar seeds planted in the forests and affect wheat crops covering over 750,000 acres of land during this critical period (see press summary for December 11). Many farmers and growers are resorting to traditional practices of praying collectively for rainfall in Mersin's Tarsus district.

SABAH (GUNEY) / ZAMAN: Omer Sabanci, President of TUSIAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), opened the new headquarters of the Mersin Businessmen and Industrialists' Association in Mersin.

ZAMAN: Oil reserves in Adiyaman province, which averaged 30,000 barrels a day ten years ago, shrunk to 10,000 barrels a day.

CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT:

BOLGE / RADIKAL: Diyarbakir police seized 101 kilograms of heroin and 3 kilograms of substance used in producing heroin hidden in sections of a truck traveling from Van to Istanbul, during two narcotics operations in Diyarbakir. Six people were detained in connection with the event. Separately, Hatay police seized 23.5 kilograms of hashish in two separate operations in Hatay and apprehended six people.

ZAMAN / EKSPRES: Police from Organized Crime and Smuggling Department of Mersin conducted an operation against an illegal criminal ring and detained 16 people.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

BOLGE / ZAMAN / EKSPRES / EVRENSEL: Sorrow stricken family members of two workers in Adana, who died in last week's plane crash in Baghdad, are still waiting anxiously to get hold of the coffins of their dead kin. Family members of the victims are claiming that if the DNA tests were conducted for all the coffins at the onset, coffins would not get mixed with each other. Officials at Prosecutor's Office, who are admitting that such crisis came upon them unawares since they were not expecting to receive burned and hardly identifiable bodies, further state that they did not conduct an initial DNA test for all of the corpses: therefore, some bodies might not be matched with the families who primarily identified the casualties from personal belongings or body parts. Officials are also looking for ways to find out about who or what is the cause of the crash, in face of legal concerns arising from compensation issues. Separately, AKP Provincial Chairman in Adana is paying visits to the families of victims to pay condolences; however, Evrensel daily reports a family member as complaining that PM

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Erdogan did not extend condolences to the families, but to the owner of the Turkish construction company. Chairperson of Turkish Iraqi Businessmen Association said that whereas the plane crash raised concerns about safety, the trade activities with Iraq would still continue incessantly.

CUMHURİYET: Adana Mayor Aytac Durak announced that the hospital, the mosque and the school that were planned to be built on a portion of land belonging to Adana's Cukurova University, which is a public university, would be built on a more spacious and appropriate plot of land located elsewhere.

YENİ SAFAK: Atilla Koc, Minister of Tourism, opened several cultural and tourism related venues in the citadel of Gaziantep whose renovation processes have been completed under the GAP (Southeastern Region Project) Regional Cultural Heritage Development Program.

GREEN